

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 087193

ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:EUR/WE:EMROWELL

APPROVED BY:EUR/WE - EDWARD M ROWELL

-----118383 051127Z /21

R 050418Z APR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUFHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0000

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 087193

FOL MOSCOW 5951 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BELGRADE BERLIN  
BONN BUCHAREST BUDAPEST LONDON MUNICH PARIS PRAGUE SOFIA  
USBERLIN USNATO WARSAW MARCH 28, 1978 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 05951

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR, FR, PINT

SUBJECT: SOVIET SATISFACTION WITH FRENCH ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: AFTER MONTHS OF SILENCE REGARDING THE RECENT  
FRENCH ELECTIONS, SOVIET PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE FINALLY  
ADDRESSED AGAIN THE FRENCH POLITICAL SITUATION IN TWO  
LENGTHY ANALYSES MARCH 23 AND 24. COMMENTING ON THE ELEC-  
TIONS AND THE POST-ELECTION POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE,  
THEY VIEWED THE GOVERNMENT VICTORY WITH EQUANIMITY AND  
POINTEDLY REPLAYED GISCARD'S POST-ELECTION REMARKS ABOUT  
THE CONTINUITY OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. THE LEFT GOT  
SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING FOR ITS LOSS, ALBEIT NOT WITHOUT  
SOME CRITICISM FOR ITS DIVISIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE  
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LOSS. THE PCF GOT BY RATHER BETTER THAN EXPECTED. PRI-  
VATELY SOVIET OFFICIALS ARE EXPRESSING THEIR SATISFACTION  
WITH THE RESULTS AND LOOKING FORWARD TO BUSINESS AS USUAL  
WITH THE FRENCH IN FOREIGN POLICY, WHILE PREDICTING, NOT  
UNHAPPILY, DOMESTIC LABOR TROUBLE AHEAD FOR THE GOF. END  
SUMMARY.

1. FOR MONTHS THE SOVIET PRESS AND OFFICIAL SOVIETS IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS HAVE BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDING ANY COMMENT WHICH WOULD SHOW PARTISANSHIP FOR EITHER THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT IN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS. THE FIRST ROUND RESULTS WERE REPORTED IN THE PRESS BRIEFLY, VERY FACTUALLY (TAKEN STRAIGHT FROM THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FIGURES WE ARE TOLD BY FRENCH EMBASSY COLLEAGUES) AND, IN A SENSE, ALMOST ANTISEPTICALLY. THERE WERE NO PRE-ELECTION ARTICLES SETTING THE SCENE, NOR WERE THERE ANY REMARKS ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST ROUND RESULTS. THE FIRST BREAK IN THIS WALL OF SILENCE CAME IN TWO STAGES, FIRST IN PRIVATE COMMENTS BY OFFICIAL SOVIETS AND SECOND IN BACK-TO-BACK ARTICLES IN SOCIALIST INDUSTRY AND PRAVDA ON MARCH 23 AND 24. THESE PRESS PIECES WERE CLEARLY DESIGNED TO PROPAGATE THE OFFICIAL LINE ON THE ELECTIONS AND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH.

2. FRENCH RESIDENT JOURNALISTS IN MOSCOW WERE THE FIRST TO HEAR COMMENTS BY OFFICIAL SOVIET SOURCES DURING THE WEEK BETWEEN THE TWO ROUNDS OF THE ELECTIONS. THEY WERE TOLD OF SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND AND OF THE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNING COALITION WOULD CARRY THE DAY IN ROUND TWO. THE SENIOR AFP REPRESENTATIVE AND THE LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT WERE TOLD BETWEEN ROUNDS BY SOVIET OFFICIALS AND OTHERS (ONE OF THE OTHERS WAS IDENTIFIED AS VICTOR LOUIS) THAT THE SOVIET CONFIDENTIAL

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UNION WAS INTERESTED IN STABILITY IN FRANCE AND CONTINUITY IN FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, BOTH OF WHICH WOULD PERMIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. BOTH JOURNALISTS WERE TOLD THAT THE SOVIETS WISHED TO SEE A VICTORY BY THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES IN ROUND TWO WITH CHIRAC AND THE GAULLISTS MAINTAINING OR REINFORCING THEIR IMPORTANT POSITION WITHIN THE COALITION. DURING THIS WEEK'S INTERLUDE WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY FRENCH EMBASSY THAT THE EMBASSY RECEIVED NO INDICATIONS OF ANY SUCH PARTISANSHIP FROM THEIR SOVIET CONTACTS.

3. THE SOVIET PRESS, OF COURSE, WHEN IT FINALLY GOT AROUND TO A COMMENT, WAS MORE CIRCUMSPECT IN ITS ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION AND OF SOVIET DESIRES. NONETHELESS, THE MESSAGE CONTAINED IN THE FIRST TWO COMMENTARIES CLEARLY SHOWS SOVIET SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS. G. DAD'YANTS WRITING IN MARCH 23 SOCIALIST INDUSTRY GIVES THREE CAUSES FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE LEFT: (A) THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN OF THE FRENCH MEDIA AND THE "BOURGEOIS PARTIES" WHICH RAISED THE SPECTER OF A "TOTALITARIAN REGIME" SHOULD THE LEFT WIN; (B) SPLITS IN

THE LEFT (MOSTLY BLAMED ON THE PS) WHICH RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW THE LEFT COULD GOVERN IF IT WERE NOT UNITED;  
(C) THE SYSTEM OF VOTING (SINGLE CONSTITUENCY) WHICH DISTORTED THE RESULTS AND GAVE A LARGE MAJORITY OF SEATS TO THOSE PARTIES WHICH WERE UNABLE TO GAIN A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE VOTES. THE LAST REASON WAS LISTED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT. THROUGHOUT THE LONG ARTICLE THERE WAS A NOTABLE LACK OF CRITICAL COMMENT OF THE GOVERNING COALITION AND NO HINT OF DISSATISFACTION AT THE RESULTS.

4. BOTH DAD'YANTS AND YURIY KHARLANOV IN PRAVDA MARCH 24 GAVE A FAVORABLE BOW IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LEFT BY CALLING ATTENTION TO "ALMOST HALF THE VOTE" (KHARLANOV) FOR THE LEFT IN ROUND ONE AND CITING A PCF  
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POLITBURO STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT IN BOTH THE FIRST AND SECOND ROUND THE LEFT AND RIGHT RECEIVED "PRACTICALLY THE SAME NUMBER OF VOTES" (DAD'YANTS). THE INCREASED STRENGTH OF THE LEFT IS ALSO PART OF THE REASON FOR KHARLANOV'S CLAIM THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE "ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN FRENCH HISTORY" AND THAT, REPLAYING A FIGARO REMARK, THINGS CAN "HARDLY BE THE SAME AS BEFORE" IN FRANCE FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS.

5. AS FOR THE COMMUNISTS, THERE IS NEITHER MUCH GOOD NOR MUCH CRITICAL SAID OF THEM IN THE TWO PIECES. MARCHAIS IS MENTIONED BY NAME ONLY IN THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRY ARTICLE, ALTHOUGH KHARLANOV'S TITLE IN PRAVDA, "FRANCE: PROBLEMS REMAIN," IS TAKEN FROM A MARCHAIS PHRASE CITED BY DAD'YANTS. NEITHER AUTHOR CHOOSES TO EVALUATE THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE PCF OR THE PS WITHIN THE LEFT OPPOSITION FOLLOWING THE ELECTION.

6. KHARLANOV AND DAD'YANTS BOTH MAKE IT A MAJOR POINT TO PREDICT INTERNAL LABOR UNREST IN THE COMING MONTHS BY MENTIONING TRADE UNION OFFICIALS' REMARKS ABOUT A "THIRD ROUND" IN THE ELECTIONS WHEN LABOR'S DEMANDS WILL BE MADE (DAD'YANTS) AND BY EMPHASIZING THAT FULFILLING THE DEMANDS OF THE WORKERS REMAINS "THE NUMBER ONE TASK" OF THE LEFT (KHARLANOV) WHICH WILL REQUIRE "UNITY OF LEFT FORCES."

7. ONLY A BRIEF REFERENCE TO FOREIGN POLICY APPEARS IN THE PRAVDA PIECE BY KHARLANOV REPEATING FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD'S RADIO AND TV STATEMENT THAT THE "FOREIGN POLICY OF FRANCE WILL CONTINUE ON ITS COURSE OF INDEPENDENCE, SECURITY AND PEACE."  
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8. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS ARE CLEARLY PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME IN SEVERAL WAYS. FIRST, IT INSURES THE GOVERNING COALITION, WITH WHOM THE SOVIETS ARE COMFORTABLE, OF A WORKING MAJORITY IN THE PARLIAMENT AND, IN SOVIET EYES, THE POSSIBILITY TO CONTINUE WITH A BASICALLY GAULLIST FOREIGN POLICY. SECOND, THE EVIDENT STRENGTH OF THE LEFT IN THE POPULAR VOTE ENABLES THEM TO LOOK AT THE ELECTIONS AS A PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT. TO SOME EXTENT IT APPEARS THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECT THE POLITICAL ACTION IN FRANCE TO BE FOCUSED IN THE LABOR UNIONS IN THE COMING MONTHS, NOT IN THE PARLIAMENT, AND THIS PROSPECT DOES NOT DISPLEASE THEM, JUDGING FROM THE MANNER OF PRESENTING THE SITUATION IN BOTH ARTICLES. DAD'YANTS SEEMS TO SUM UP THE SOVIET ATTITUDE ON THIS POINT IN HIS CONCLUDING SENTENCE IN WHICH HE QUOTES MITTERAND THAT "THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IS RIGHTIST, BUT THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE ARE LEFTIST." WHETHER ACCURATE OR NOT THIS IS PROBABLY HOW THE SOVIETS SEE IT, AND WOULD LIKE THINGS TO REMAIN FOR NOW. TOON UNQUOTE VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 apr 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978STATE087193  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** EUR/WE:EMROWELL  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780146-1196  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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**TAGS:** PINT, UR, FR  
**To:** ROME  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014